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So, I'm not going to do any of that.

Instead, I'd like to tell you a few things that I noticed from being there that perhaps you have not heard anywhere else. But first of all, a little history.

Article II of the U.S. Constitution says, "The President shall from time to time give to Congress information on the State of the Union..." George Washington delivered the first such message to a joint session of Congress in New York on Jan. 8, 1790. Thomas Jefferson thought the practice "monarchical" and so he stopped making an oral presentation and instead merely had a written message delivered to Congress. The speech was revived by Woodrow Wilson 112 years later, in 1913. The "message" was first called the State of the Union by Franklin Roosevelt in 1935.

So, our custom today of an annual speech before a joint session of Congress has not always been thus. But it is quite the spectacle nonetheless. Being in the room you definitely feel the gravity of the moment and the weight of the history of all those speeches past. It is really the only scheduled time during the year in which nearly the entire government of the world's only superpower is in one room. The president, vice president, cabinet, Supreme Court, Joint Chiefs of Staff and the entire Congress are all there.

As a precaution, a key few people are kept away from the speech in a secure location to ensure continuity of government in the event of a catastrophe at the Capitol. Orange County's own Chris Cox was sequestered away from the speech two years ago. Had something occurred this year, the government would have been entrusted to the secretary of Veterans Affairs, Jim Nicholson and the president pro tempore of the Senate, Ted Stevens from Alaska, as well as a senator from North Dakota and one congressman each from Virginia and California (George Miller).

The applause and standing ovations are not scripted, although lines to which the president expects to receive applause are rather obvious. Of course, the party in opposition always finds less to cheer about than the president's party does. But the Democrats, in their zeal to try and distinguish themselves, raised their greatest applause at the president's line that last year the Congress had failed to pass Social Security reform. I thought that it was rather odd to cheer wildly for having done nothing. In the end, I don't think it served them well.

They were rock silent when the president talked about the growth in the economy by pointing out that America had created 4.6 million new jobs in the last 2 1/2 years, which is more than was created by Japan and Europe combined in the same period. What kind of a message were the Democrats sending there? That they are against more jobs when done under a Republican government?

New Supreme Court justices John Roberts and Sam Alito were also there. Democrats also did not applaud when they were introduced. But, interestingly enough, Democratic Sen. Joe Lieberman stood and applauded on numerous occasions when all or most of his Democratic colleagues kept their fannies in their seats and their hands at their sides. Is he out of touch with rank and file Democrats, or are they?

Justices Roberts and Alito, attending their first State of the Union address as Supreme Court justices, stood and applauded at the president's first few lines. Then, one of their more seasoned colleagues on the bench whispered something in their ears, after which they remained seated. You see, even if the President who appointed you is speaking, it is customary for the justices of the Supreme Court to be without expression.

And if you think that the State of the Union speeches have gotten too long, consider that the longest one ever was prepared by Harry Truman in 1946 and was 25,000 words long. Had it been orally delivered, it would have taken more than 3 hours. But fortunately for the populace at the time, it was delivered only in written form. By contrast, the very first State of the Union speech delivered by George Washington was about the same length as this column. It would have taken only about 6 minutes to deliver orally.

Our Republic would be better served with smaller government and shorter speeches.